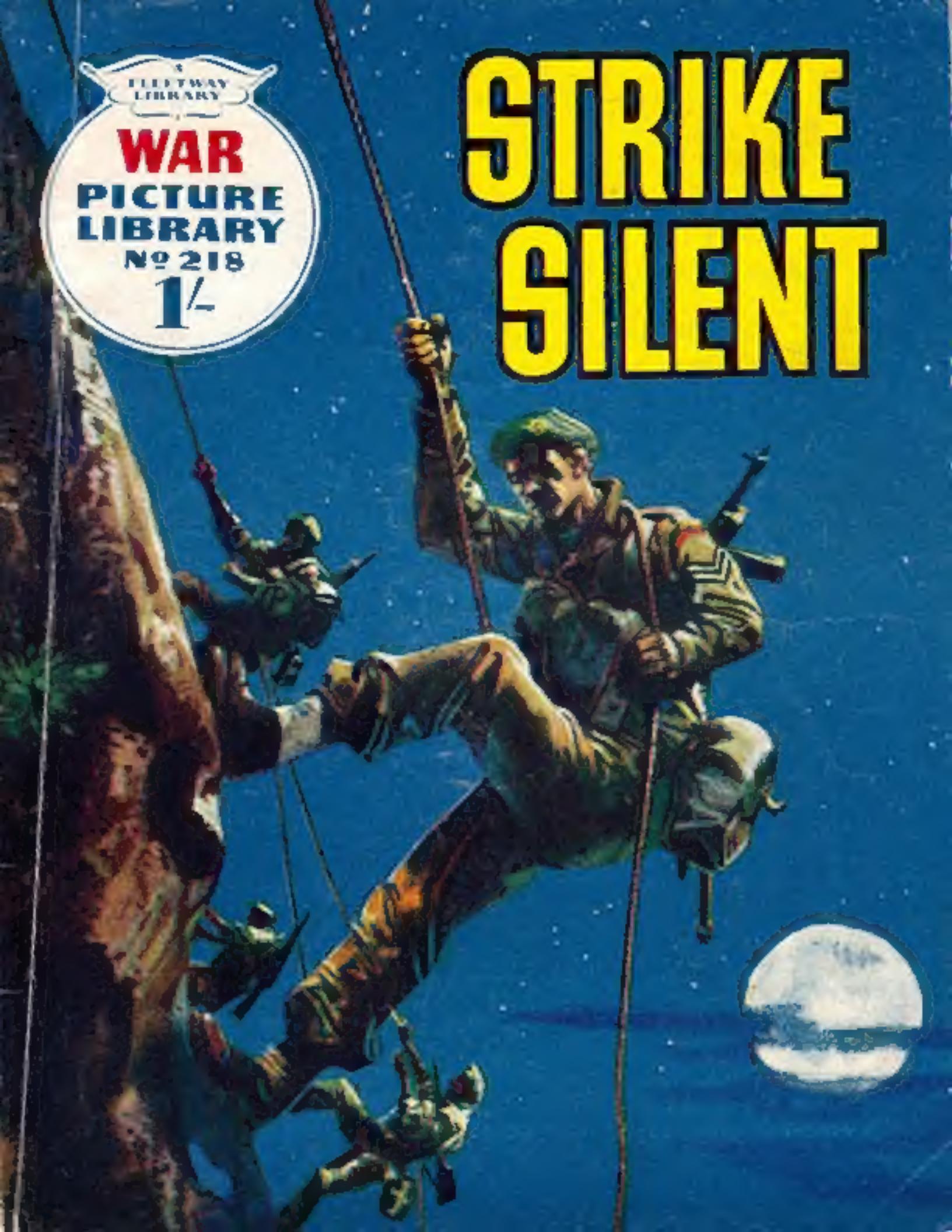


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STRIKE SILENT

FOR ONE MAN, WAR CAN BE
AN EXCITING CHALLENGE.
FOR ANOTHER, IT CAN BE A
MIND-WHIRLING TERROR.
BUT EVEN THE COWARD, WHEN
HIS HONOUR IS AT STAKE, CAN
BE WILLING TO PAY THE
SAVAGE PRICE . . .

Chapter 1. The Steel Trap

WHEN GEORGE BRAND DIED HE BEQUEATHED HIS BROAD ACRES TO HIS TWO SONS, MARTIN AND NOEL. MARTIN, THE ELDER SON, CARRIED THE LOVE OF THE SOIL IN HIS BLOOD BUT NOEL WAS BORED AND RESTLESS.. ONE DAY THINGS CAME TO A HEAD...



NOEL BRAND WAS A MISFIT ON THE FARM. MARTIN KNEW THAT, BUT HE HAD ALWAYS HOPED HIS WAYWARD BROTHER WOULD DEVELOP A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY TO HIS INHERITANCE.



A GLINT OF ANGER SPRANG
INTO NOEL'S EYES...



ALL THE STORED-UP RESENTMENT AND FRUSTRATION OF THE PAST YEAR FLARED UP IN THE YOUNGER MAN AS HE TURNED ON HIS BROTHER.

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING. IF YOU WAIT LONG ENOUGH I'LL WALK OUT AND LEAVE YOU THE LOT. WELL, YOU'RE MISTAKEN! IF I DON'T GET THAT MONEY, I'LL...

PUT THAT WRENCH DOWN.
I'M WARNING YOU, NOEL.

THERE WAS A COLD FINALITY IN MARTIN'S VOICE. TAMELY, NOEL DROPPED HIS ARM...

WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO. WHEN YOU COME TO ME WITH A SENSIBLE PROPOSITION I'LL LISTEN. BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BREAK UP THE FARM!



6 Strike Silent

FOR TWO DAYS THE BROTHERS WENT ABOUT THE FARM IN A COLD SILENCE. THEN, ON FRIDAY, MARTIN DROVE INTO THE NEARBY MARKET TOWN TO BUY STOCK...

MARTIN BRAND? DO YOU THINK I COULD HAVE A WORD WITH YOU - IN PRIVATE.

OKAY, CHUM - BUT WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?



MARTIN WAS SOON TO LEARN...

I'M A BOOKMAKER, MISTER BRAND. YOUR BROTHER RUNS QUITE AN ACCOUNT WITH ME. HE'S BEEN FALLING BEHIND LATELY AND WHEN I PRESSED HIM FOR PAYMENT HE GAVE ME THIS CHEQUE FOR FOUR HUNDRED POUNDS.

FOUR HUNDRED! BUT THIS CHEQUE'S SIGNED IN MY NAME. IT'S A FORGERY!



THE MAN'S WORDS STRUCK MARTIN LIKE A BLOW. HE HAD ALWAYS KNOWN HIS BROTHER WAS RASH AND IMPULSIVE, BUT THIS NEW REVELATION OF HIS CHARACTER HURT HIM DEEPLY.

EXACTLY.
AND HE STILL
OWES ME FOUR
HUNDRED QUID.
IF I DON'T GET
IT IN THREE
DAYS I TAKE
THIS TO THE
POLICE.

I'LL - I'LL
SEE YOU GET
YOUR MONEY.

WHEN NOEL RETURNED FROM THE VILLAGE THAT NIGHT, HE FOUND MARTIN WAITING FOR HIM. THE TRUTH WAS OUT...

SO WHAT!
I WAS FLAT BROKE.
HE WAS PUTTING
PRESSURE ON ME,
TAKE IT OUT OF MY
SHARE OF THE
FARM.

I'VE DONE THAT,
NOEL. THAT LEAVES YOU
A SUM OF FOURTEEN
HUNDRED POUNDS. IT'S
HERE IN THE ENVELOPE.

MARTIN'S VOICE
WAS EDGED WITH
BITTERNESS AS
HE WENT ON....

I RAISED
A LOAN AT THE
BANK TODAY. I
HAD TO MORTGAGE
THE FARM TO DO
IT. THAT'S YOUR
SHARE. FIRST
THING TOMORROW
YOU'LL LEAVE THIS
PLACE AND NEVER
COME BACK!

Strike Silent

IF MARTIN EXPECTED HIS BROTHER TO BE SURPRISED HE WAS DISAPPOINTED. THE PROSPECT OF THE MONEY APPEALED TO HIS PLEASURE-LOVING SOUL.



THAT NIGHT MARTIN SLEPT FITFULLY, AND WHEN HE AWOKE IT WAS TO SEE THE ROOM BATHED IN A SULLEN RED GLARE. OUTSIDE, HE HEARD THE CRACKLING OF BLAZING TIMBER. HE RAN TO THE WINDOW...



Strike Silent

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HURRIEDLY HE DRESSED AND SEARCHED THE HOUSE. BUT NOEL'S ROOM WAS EMPTY. HIS CAR HAD GONE. HE HAD TAKEN HIS LAST OUNCE OF FLESH.

I CALLED THE BRIGADE, MISTER BRAND, BUT I THINK IT'S TOO LATE. ALL THAT EQUIPMENT GONE UP TOO. I WONDER WHO COULD HAVE DONE SUCH A THING?

HE'S EVEN TAKEN THE MEN'S WAGES! ALL RIGHT, NOEL, YOU WIN! YOU'VE RUINED ME!



MARTIN CAUGHT THE SUSPICION IN THE FARMHAND'S VOICE BUT LOYALTY TO HIS BROTHER FORCED HIM TO HIS DEFENCE.

I WONDER HOW IT STARTED. I'LL GAMBLE IT WEREN'T AN ACCIDENT. MAYBE SOMEBODY WITH A GRUDGE AGAINST YE...

WE'LL NEVER KNOW THE TRUTH, BEN. AND I DON'T WANT YOU TO GOSSIP ABOUT IT. IT'S OVER AND DONE WITH NOW.



BUT MARTIN BRAND WAS SOON TO HAVE OTHER PROBLEMS THAN THOSE ABOUT HIS WAYWARD BROTHER. ACROSS THE CHANNEL A MAD GAMBLER, PLAYING FOR STAKES THAT WERE TO SHAKE THE WORLD, CONFERRED WITH HIS GENERALS.



THE PANZERS CRASHED THROUGH POLAND, AND ENGLAND WAS AT WAR. THE TENTACLES REACHED OUT TO A DEBT-RIDDEN LITTLE FARM IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. MARTIN MADE HIS DECISION...



MARTIN DID WELL IN THE ARMY
THE BIG-BONED YOUNG FARMER,
TOUGHENED AND DISCIPLINED BY
WORK AND WEATHER, TOOK READILY
TO ARMY ROUTINE. HIS NATIVE
INTELLIGENCE DID THE REST.

SO THEY HUNG SOME
STRIPES ON YOU, MARTY,
BOY. THERE'LL BE
HIGH JINKS ON THE OLD
FARM TONIGHT. DO WE
CELEBRATE IN TOWN
TONIGHT?



HE CROSSED OVER TO FRANCE WITH
THE B.E.F. AND SETTLED DOWN TO
THE SLOW BUILD-UP IN
PREPARATION FOR BATTLE.

NO WONDER THEY
CALL IT THE BORE WAR.
NOTHING EVER HAPPENS.
I RECKON THAT MAGINOT
LINE'S GOT THE PANTS
SCARED OFF OLD
HITLER.



SPRING CAME ROUND AND THE NAZI WAR MACHINE SMASHED INTO
FRANCE. THE PANZERS TURNED THE MAGINOT LINE THEN WHEELED IN
A PINCER MOVEMENT BEHIND THE BRITISH. AN ARMY WAS CAUGHT
IN A STEEL TRAP.



THEY FOUGHT THEIR WAY TO THE BEACHES OF DUNKIRK, DAZED WITH FATIGUE, HAMMERED BY THE STUKA'S, THE DISCIPLINED RANKS WAITED FOR THE ARMADA OF LITTLE SHIPS THAT SAILED FROM ENGLAND TO PLUCK THEM FROM THE VERY JAWS OF DEATH...



Strike Silent

13

THEY STUMBED ASHORE IN ENGLAND GAUNT, LIMSHAVEN, SHAMED BY
DEFEAT - BURNING WITH A SCOW ANGER THAT WAS TO EXPLODE ACROSS
FRANCE FOUR YEARS HENCE...



BUT ONE ENGLISHMAN, AT LEAST WAS STILL ON FRENCH SOIL. NOEL
REANO TURNED AS HIS WIFE SWUNG RUKING FROM THE RADIO...



Strike Silent

IN A FEW MONTHS NOEL BRAND HAD SQUANDED HIS MONEY IN PARIS AND THEN HE HAD BEEN BEFRIENDED BY HELOISE DULOCQ AND HAD MARRIED HER.



THE GENDARME WHO CHECKED NOEL'S PAPER'S WATCHED THE ENGLISHMAN CURIOUSLY.

M'SIEUR IS BRITISH
NO DOUBT YOU WILL TRY
TO REACH ENGLAND? YOU
ARE ANXIOUS TO ENLIST AND
FIGHT FOR YOUR COUNTRY,
I EXPECT.

YES,
THAT'S
ABOUT
IT.

BUT NOEL BRAND HAD NO SUCH INTENTION. IN HIS EYES, THE WAR WAS LOST AND ALL THAT REMAINED WAS TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE CONQUEROR. HELOISE KNEW THAT TOO.

WHY DID YOU LIE, NOEL? YOU ARE NOT THE KIND THAT FIGHTS BACK.

I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING: ENGLAND IS FINISHED, SO IS FRANCE!

NO, FRANCE IS NOT FINISHED! WE ARE PEASANTS AND WE KNOW HOW TO FIGHT. MY FATHER WILL CARRY ON THE BATTLE IN BRITTANY. LET ME ADVISE YOU, NOEL. NEVER TALK OF DEFEAT TO MY FATHER.

IN THE FEW WEEKS HELOISE DULOCQ HAD KNOWN HER HUSBAND SHE HAD PLUMBED THE SHALLOWS OF HIS CHARACTER.

Chapter 2. Fight Back

WHILE FRANCE LAY UNDER THE HEEL OF THE NAZIS, THE BRITISH ARMY BEGAN THE SLOW PROCESS OF REBUILDING AND REARMING TO BATTLE STRENGTH. ONE DAY A VISITOR ARRIVED AT THE CAMP WHERE MARTIN BRAND WAS STATIONED...

I'LL GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT. A NEW UNIT IS BEING FORMED UNDER THE NAME OF COMMANDO. WE ARE LOOKING FOR TOUGH, SEASONED MEN WHO ARE PREPARED TO UNDER-

TAKE RATHER DANGEROUS MISSIONS.



SOMEHOW, THE SPEAKER, WITH HIS CLIPPED VOICE AND DECEPTIVELY CASUAL MANNER, FIRED BRAND'S IMAGINATION.

IT WILL INVOLVE A HARD TRAINING SESSION TO WEED OUT THE WEAKLINGS. DON'T MISTAKE ME, CHAPS. IT'LL BE TOUGH! IT HAS TO BE.

“MIGHT BE WORTH TRYING, AT LEAST I'D BE GETTING A CRACK AT SOMEBODY!”



BRAND VOLUNTEERED AND WAS ACCEPTED. A MONTH LATER HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO A COMMANDO TRAINING UNIT-AND GOT HIS FIRST TASTE OF WHAT THAT REALLY MEANT.

NOW YOU LOT ARE GOING TO SCALE THAT CLIFF - FIRST BY DAYLIGHT, THEN AT NIGHT. USE YOUR FEET LIKE I TOLD YOU AND YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT.

WHAT'S HE TAKE US FOR? FLIES?

THE COURSE WENT ON, TESTING EACH MAN TO BREAKING POINT, SEARCHING OUT THE HIDDEN FLAWS IN HIS DETERMINATION AND COURAGE.

I COULD HAVE BROKEN YOUR NECK THAT TIME, BRAND, BUT I HATE DEAD SOLDIERS MESSING UP THE PLACE / NOW TRY AGAIN AND THIS TIME DON'T HESITATE AS YOU COME IN. THAT'S BAD!



MARTIN BRAND TOOK TO THE VIOLENT ART OF MODERN WARFARE QUICKLY AND WELL.



THE COMMANDOS HAD TO LEARN THE HABIT OF IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE TO ORDERS, REHEARSING FOR THE DAY WHEN THE BATTLE WOULD BE IN EARNEST AND A MAN WHO IGNORED ORDERS WAS A DEAD MAN.



TWO MEN DREW BACK INVOLUNTARILY. THEY WOULD BE MARKED DOWN AS FAILURES.



Strike Silent

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THE SERGEANT LINED THEM UP ON THE BEACH.
THEIR TEETH CHATTERING FROM THE ICY SEA.

NOW WE'LL START OUR
ROUTE MARCH AS PLANNED.
DON'T WORRY, YOUR CLOTHES
WILL DRY ON YOU. REMEMBER,
COMMANDOS NEVER CATCH
PNEUMONIA. THAT'S FOR
COMMON SOLDIERS!



BRAND PASSED THE COURSE SUCCESSFULLY.
HE HAD GONE INTO IT A TOUGH, SEASONED
SOLDIER. HE CAME OUT OF IT A COMMANDO.

WE'VE TRIED TO TEACH
YOU THE LESSONS OF
SURVIVAL UNDER ADVERSE
CONDITIONS. ALWAYS
REMEMBER YOU ARE FIGHTING
A POWERFUL ENEMY, SUPERBLY
ARMED AND DISCIPLINED.
BUT NEVER FORGET THAT
FOR ALL THAT, HE WILL
BE BEATEN!



ENGLAND WAS PROFITING FROM THE DISASTER OF DUNKIRK, WHILE HER ARMIES MADE PREPARATIONS FOR THE COUNTER-BLOW, THE COMMANDOS HAD TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE.



MEANWHILE THE INTELLIGENCE SECTION AT G.H.Q. IN LONDON WERE STUDYING A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY AN AIR RECONNAISSANCE UNIT TWO DAYS PREVIOUSLY.



THAT'S FOR GENERAL STAFF TO DECIDE. MAYBE A NIGHT RAID BY PICKED MEN TO CHECK ON IT - OR EVEN BRING PART OF IT AWAY FOR EXAMINATION
BY OUR BACK-ROOM MEN!



"A NIGHT RAID BY PICKED MEN": IT WAS MADE TO ORDER FOR THE COMMANDOS. THE DECISION WAS TAKEN AND PLANS DRAWN UP.

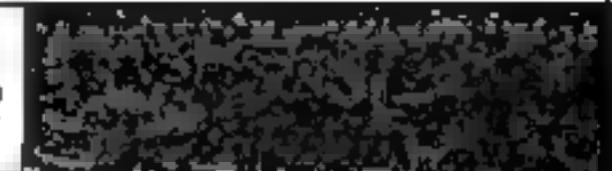
WHAT ABOUT THE LOCAL RESISTANCE & CAN THEY HELP US?



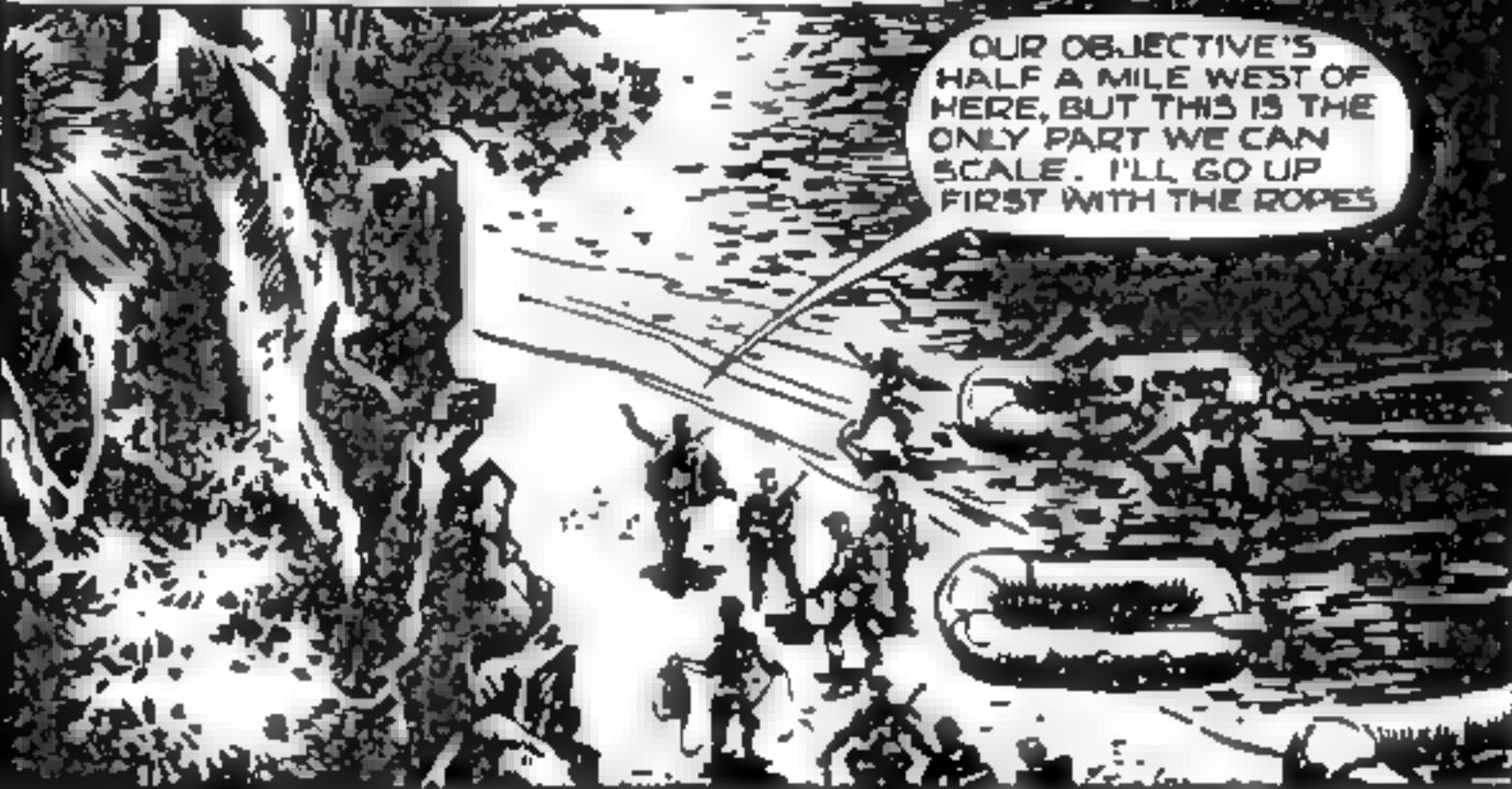
AFAIR NOT, SIR
WE HAVEN'T MADE
EFFECTIVE CONTACT YET.
WE DROPPED TWO AGENTS
OVER THERE A WEEK AGO,
BUT SO FAR WE'VE HEARD
NOTHING.



TWO NIGHTS LATER A UNIT OF COMMANDOS, MARTIN BRAND AMONG THEM, STEPPED ASHORE FROM THEIR RUBBER DINGHIES AND GATHERED BELOW THE TOWERING CLIFFS OF THE BRITTANY COAST.



OUR OBJECTIVE'S
HALF A MILE WEST OF
HERE, BUT THIS IS THE
ONLY PART WE CAN
SCALE. I'LL GO UP
FIRST WITH THE ROPES.



Strike Silent

PRESENTLY THEY HEARD THE SOFT SWISH OF THE FALLING ROPES AND STARTED TO MOUNT TO THE CLIFF-TOP, MOVING WITH THE STEALTH OF LONG PRACTICE



THIS WAS THE CULMINATION OF MONTHS OF TRAINING UNDER FROZEN CONDITIONS - THE FIRST VENTURE INTO ENEMY OCCUPIED TERRITORY ..

WE'LL LOB A FEW GRENADES INTO THE GUARDHOUSE TO KEEP THEM BUSY WHILE THE REST OF YOU MAKE A DASH FOR THE SCANNER. TURNER IS THE TECHNICIAN. HE'LL TELL YOU WHAT PARTS TO TAKE.



CAPTAIN DUNNING AND TWO OTHERS
SLOW AWAY INTO THE DARKNESS.
THEN THE NIGHT ERUPTED IN FLAME
AND SOUND.

THERE IT
GOES. LET'S
HAVE SOME
ACTION BABY.
THIS IS IT!

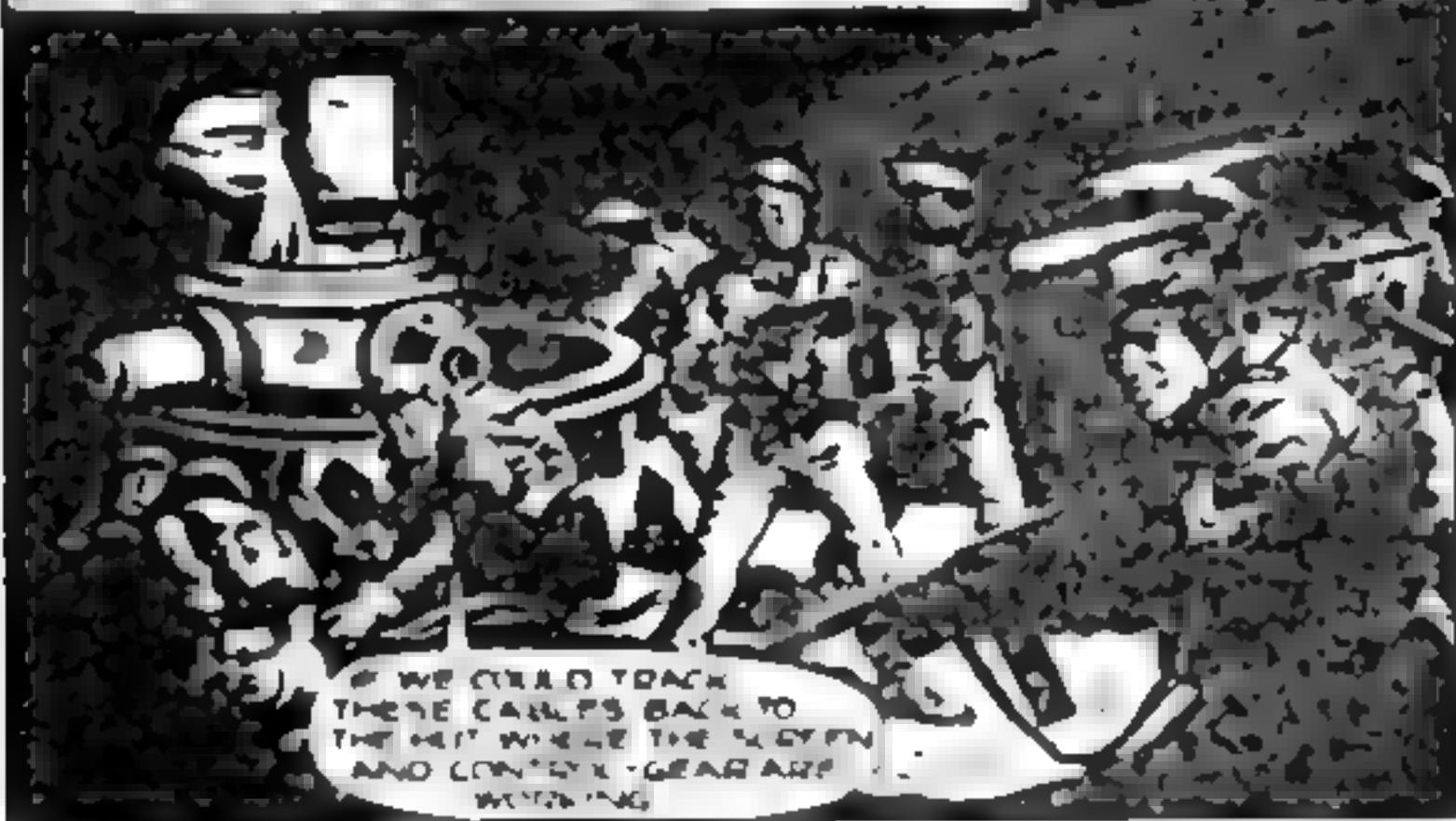


MARTIN BRAND FOUND
HIMSELF RUNNING AT TOP
SPEED IN A MAD CONFUSION
OF FLAME AND STARTLED
G.F.A.



Strike Silent

WE PAY A SEARCH LIGHT BEAN SAFETY TO SITE
STOPPED AND FIX UPDO - DROPPING THE RAKUDS
IN A CONE OF EYE STALKING LIGHT



WE CRAWL TOOK
THE CABLES BACK TO
THE HELI WHILE THE PILOT
AND COPILOT - GEAR ARE
WITNESSING

AND THEN A GUNFIRE FROM A MACHINE GUN IN A HOUSE
CLOUDED FOR NARROWLY HAD TO GET OUT THERE



CAPTAIN DEEMING SAW HIS MEN FALL IN THAT HAIL OF BULLETS, AND MADE THE ONLY DECISION HE COULD...



AS THEY RACED FROM THE SIGHT, BRAND SAW DEEMING DROP AND HALF-TURNED TO GO TO HIS AID. THEN HE RECALLED THE LESSON OF OBEDIENCE TO ORDERS.



THE RAID HAD FAILED, CUT DOWN ALMOST TO EXTINCTION. ONLY THREE SURVIVORS PADDLED OUT TO THE WAITING ESCORT VESSEL.



Strike Silent

THEY REACHED BASE BEFORE DAWN, SHOCKED AND DAZED, ACHING WITH THE BITTERNESS OF DEFEAT AND THE MEMORY OF COMRADES DYING ON A CLIFF-TOP.



MARTIN BRAND'S REPORT WENT BACK TO GENERAL STAFF H Q IN LONDON.



Strike Silent

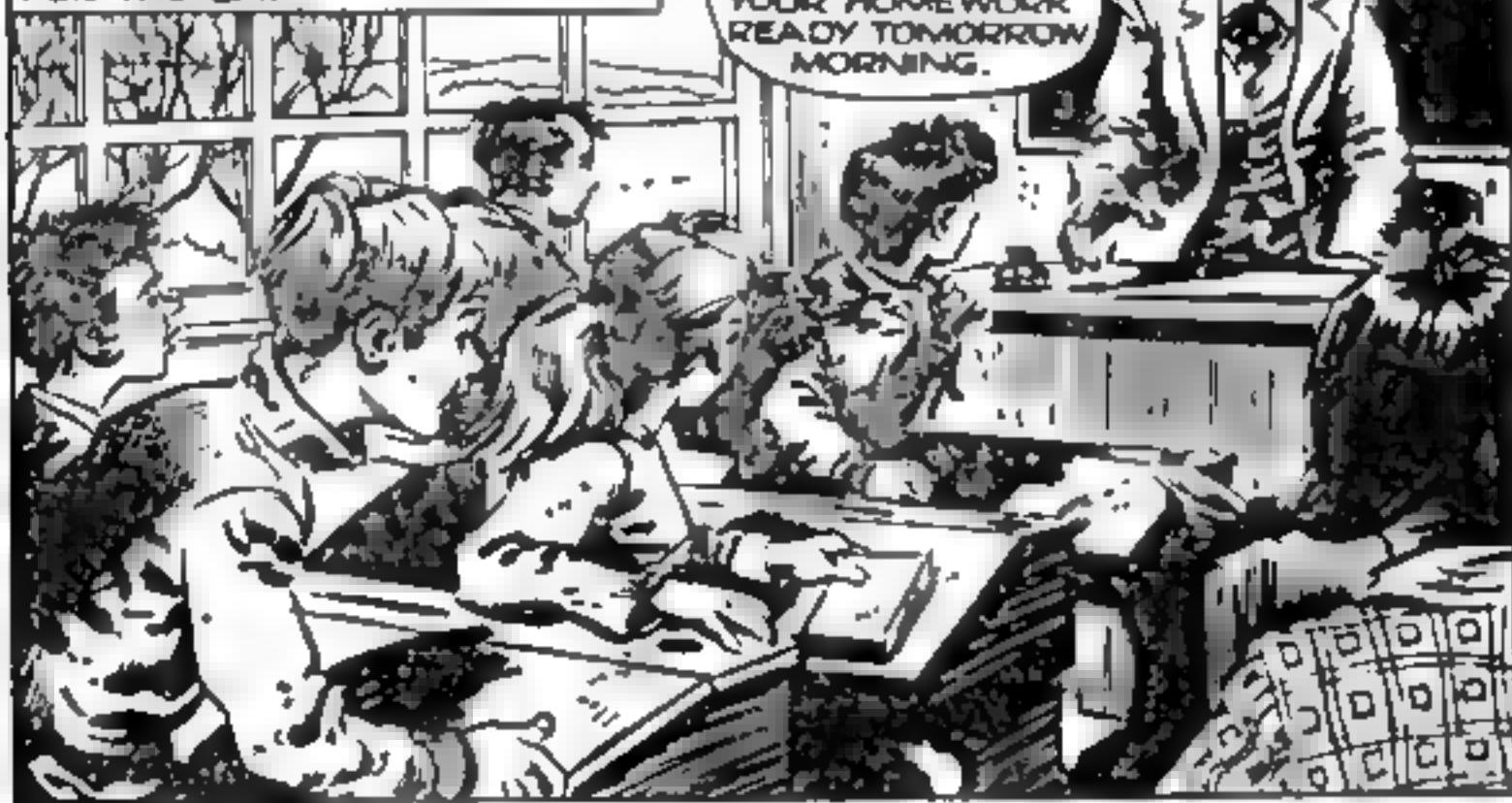


THEN THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICER DROPPED A BOMBSHELL RIGHT INTO THE LAPs OF THE CONFERENCE.



MEANWHILE, IN A LITTLE SCHOOLHOUSE AT BRIER, PERE DULOCQ, SCHOOLTEACHER, WAS DISMISSING HIS CLASS FOR THE DAY

THAT WILL BE ALL, MES ENFANTS SEE THAT YOU HAVE YOUR HOMEWORK READY TOMORROW MORNING.



BUT THE BENEVOLENT SMILE OF OLD PERE DULOCQ MASKED A RAZOR-KEEN BRAIN. FOR HE WAS THE ORGANISING MASTERMIND OF THE LOCAL UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT



I TALKED TO THE 'ROCK' THIS MORNING. HE SAYS THE BRITISH MADE A RAID LAST NIGHT, THEY LOST NINE MEN AND WERE DRIVEN OFF. THE BOCHES ARE CELEBRATING.

SO TELL THE 'ROCK' I WILL SEE HIM TONIGHT.

HELOISE AND NOEL BRAND HAD GONE TO LIVE WITH HER FATHER IN BRIER. BUT THE SHREWD OLD MAN HAD ALREADY FOUND THE FLAWS IN THE ENGLISHMAN'S CHARACTER.



WITH THE PASSAGE OF MONTHS AMONG STRANGERS IN A LAND OCCUPIED BY ENEMIES, NOEL HAD TURNED INTO A BROODING, MOROSE MAN.



BUT HELOISE KNEW HER MAN ONLY TOO WELL. HER AFFECTION FOR HIM HAD TURNED TO CONTEMPT, EVEN THOUGH SHE CLUNG TO HIM OUT OF LOYALTY.

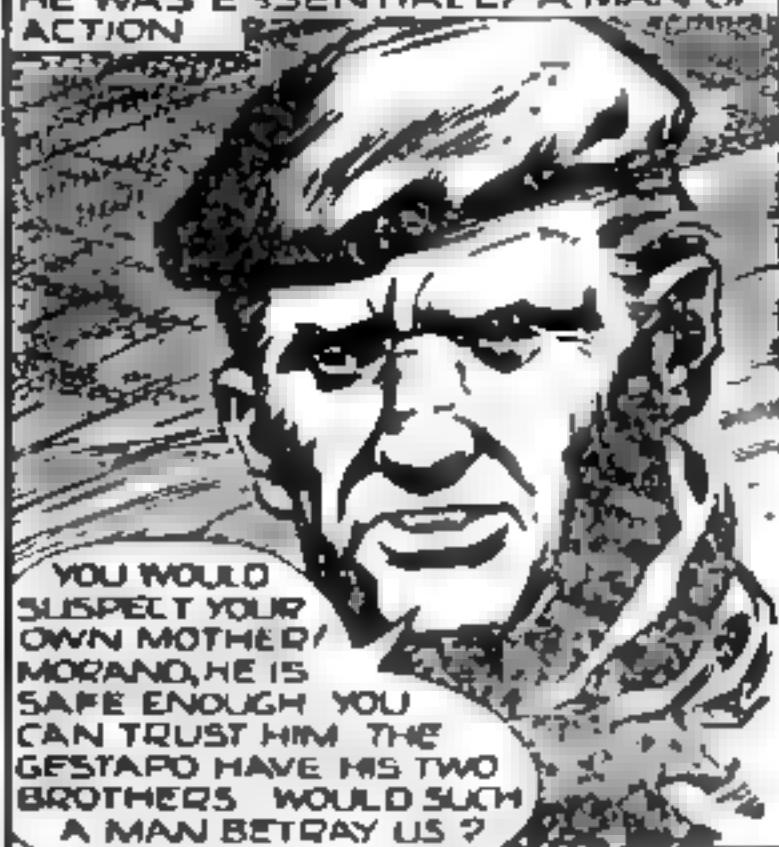


Strike Silent

THAT NIGHT, PERE DULOCQ MADE A SECRET RENDEZVOUS WITH HIS LIEUTENANT, JEAN ROQUETON, KNOWN AS THE ROCK A RESOLUTE FIGHTER, AND AN IMPLACABLE ENEMY OF THE GERMANS.



THE ROCK SNORTED IMPATIENTLY. HE HAD NOT THE SUBTLE SCHEMING BRAIN OF DULOCQ. HE WAS ESSENTIALLY A MAN OF ACTION.



DULOCQ IGNORED THE TINY WARNING FLICKER THAT SHOT THROUGH HIS BRAIN AND WENT ON...

A BRITISH AGENT FROM LE HAVRE MOVES IN TONIGHT. WE MEET HIM AN HOUR BEFORE DAWN AT THE BARRIQUER CROSSROADS. GREAT THINGS ARE IN THE AIR, JEAN.



AT MIDNIGHT THAT SAME NIGHT, SEIDLER, THE LOCAL GESTAPO CHIEF WAS ENTERTAINING THE GERMAN TROOP COMMANDANT IN THE MANOR HE HAD TAKEN OVER FOR HIS HEADQUARTERS.



SEIDLER SMILED AND THE COMMANDANT FELT A FAINT STAB OF FEAR BELOW THE CONTEMPT AND LOATHING HE HELD FOR THE GESTAPO OFFICER



Strike Silent

SEIDLER'S AIDE
MOVED TO THE DOOR
OF THE ROOM AND
OPENED IT. A SMALL
WISP OF A MAN
ENTERED.

MORAND HERE IS
WORKING FOR US, TO
ENSURE THE WELFARE
OF HIS TWO BROTHERS.
YOU UNDERSTAND? NOW
TELL US WHAT YOU
HEARD TONIGHT,
MY FRIEND.

I WILL
TELL YOU,
M'SIEUR

WHEN MORAND HAD FINISHED, THE GESTAPO
OFFICER DISMISSED HIM LIGHTLY.

I HAVE BETRAYED MY
PEOPLE AND MURDERED MY
SOUL, M'SIEUR. NOW WILL YOU
HONOUR YOUR WORD TO ME? ♦
YOU WILL SET MY BROTHERS
FREE? ♦

THEY WILL
BE RELEASED
IN DUE COURSE.
NOW LEAVE US!

WHO DOES HE THINK WE ARE THAT ONE? I HAD THEM SHOT THIS MORNING NOW TO BUSINESS. IT APPEARS THAT DULOCO AND RODUPTON ARE THE LOCAL LEADERS. WE SHALL BE THERE AT THE BARRIQUEE CROSSROADS THIS MORNING TO MEET THEM, HERO OF BRITAIN!



AN HOUR BEFORE DAWN PESE DULOCO AND THE ROCK WAITED BE SIDE THE LONELY BARRIQUEE CROSSROADS.



THEN AN ANCIENT TRUCK CLANKED PAST THEM STOPPED FOR A MOMENT AND THEN DROVE ON. A TALL LITHE FIGURE WALKED TOWARDS THEM...



Strike Silent

ONCE THE PREARRANGED IDENTIFICATION GREETING HAD BEEN EXCHANGED, CAPTAIN FOSTER WASTED NO TIME.

YOU KNOW WHY I AM HERE. BY TONIGHT OUR INTELLIGENCE PEOPLE WANT FULL DETAILS OF THE GERMAN DEFENCES IN THIS AREA. IT IS URGENT!

ALL THAT HAS BEEN ATTENDED TO, M'SIEUR. DEFENCE-POINTS, WEAPONS, DISPOSITION OF MEN - WE HAVE THEM ALL. YOU WILL LODGE AT THE FARM OF HOQUETON HERE.

A NOISE BEHIND THEM SPUN THE THREE MEN ROUND. A VOICE RASPED IN THE DARKNESS ...

STAY WHERE YOU ARE! ANY MAN WHO MOVES WILL BE SHOT!

SEIDLER! WE'VE BEEN BETRAYED! RUN! MY FRIENDS! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

SWIFT-FOOTED AS A CAT FOR ALL HIS TREMENDOUS BULK, THE ROCK CHARGED THROUGH THE CORDON, CLEAVING A PATH WITH HIS BULL-LIKE SHOULDERS AND GREAT FISTS.



AT THE SAME TIME, THE BRITISH AGENT MADE HIS BID FOR ESCAPE. BUT HE WAS NOT FAST ENOUGH...



Strike Silent

SEIDLER STUDIED THE FACE OF THE DEAD BRITISH AGENT, HIS BRAIN WORKING WITH THE MERCILESS CUNNING OF A WOLF STALKING A DEER.

ONE OF THEM GOT AWAY, HERR SEIDLER. HE IS A MONSTER. HE KILLED ONE OF MY MEN WITH HIS BARE FIST!

WE STILL HAVE DULOCQ. CORDON OFF THE AREA TO FIND ROQUETON, THEN BRING DULOCQ AND HIS FAMILY TO MY HEADQUARTERS FOR INTERROGATION!

THE GESTAPO MOVED WITH BRUTAL SPEED...

WE KNOW ALL WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOU, DULOCQ, AND WE'LL SOON PICK UP ROQUETON. WE ALSO KNOW WHY THAT BRITISH AGENT CAME HERE.

WHO BETRAYED US, M'SIEUR? WAS IT MORAND?

BUT SEIDLER DID NOT ANSWER. HE WAS WATCHING NOEL BRAND, STRUCK BY THE STRONG FACIAL RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN HIM AND THE DEAD BRITISH AGENT. AT LAST HE RAPPED OUT AN ORDER...

LEAVE THIS MAN ALONE WITH ME AND TAKE THE OTHERS AWAY.

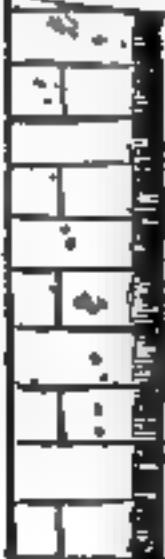
ALREADY A SCHEME OF DIABOLICAL CUNNING WAS TAKING SHAPE IN THE GESTAPO CHIEF'S FERTILE BRAIN.



ACCL-STOMED TO DEALING WITH MEN OF ALL TYPES FROM HERO TO COWARD, SEIDLER HAD MEASURED BRAND SHREWOLY AND EXPERTLY.

THEN YOU CAN SAVE HER AND YOURSELF. DO WHAT I SAY AND I'LL RELEASE YOU BOTH - EVEN IF THE OLD MAN HAS TO FACE THE FIRING-SQUAD.

VERY WELL.
WHAT HAVE I
TO DO?





NOEL BRAND YIELDED WITHOUT A STRUGGLE.



Chapter 3. Landing Party

THAT MORNING, USING THE CODE BETRAYED TO THEM BY MORAND THE GERMANS SENT A RADIO MESSAGE TO THE BRITISH INTELLIGENCE.

THE HUNTING HERE IS GOOD. TODAY WE TRAPPED FOUR HADES AND THREE RABBITS. THE FOOD POSITION SHOULD IMPROVE WITH THE HARVEST. ARMAND SENDS HIS BEST WISHES.



BACK IN ENGLAND, THE MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED AT INTELLIGENCE H Q. AND SWIFTLY DECODED.

EXCELLENT! FOSTER MADE CONTACT AND HAS THE INFORMATION. HE'LL MEET OUR RECCO LANDING PARTY AT MIDNIGHT TONIGHT, BELOW THE CLIFFS SOUTH OF BRIER. LAY EVERYTHING ON, JEPSON.



WORD WAS RELAYED TO A COMMANDO CAMP NEAR THE COAST...

THE TRIP'S ON, TOMMY. NO MOON TONIGHT, THAT'S HANDY. I'LL TAKE BRAND, HARPER AND KYLE. I WANT A FAST LAUNCH LAD ON FOR TEN. GET CRACKING!



Strike Silent

THAT NIGHT, A POWERFUL LAUNCH CRESTED OUT OF THE HARBOUR, THEN OPENED UP ITS THROTTLE AS IT HIT THE CHANNEL SWELL. MARTIN BRAND FELT A STRANGE EXALTATION.



AS THE LAUNCH PLOUGHED ON, NOEL BRAND WAITED BELOW THE CLIFFS WITH TWO GESTAPO OFFICIALS WHO WERE POSING AS RESISTANCE FIGHTERS

HERE ARE THE PAPERS, BRAND. NO TRICKY BUSINESS. REMEMBER, I SPEAK ENGLISH, TOO.



WHILE THEY WAITED, THE TWO GESTAPO
MEN GOSSIPED IN LOW VOICES. BRAND
HEARD THEM—AND HIS HEART
CLENCHED WITH ANGER AND DISMAY.

I SAW MORAND
YESTERDAY. HE STILL THINKS
HIS TWO BROTHERS ARE
ALIVE. I DIDN'T TELL
HIM SEIDLER HAD
THEM EXECUTED.



THE EVIDENCE OF SEIDLER'S BASE
DECEIT HAD DRIVEN HOME THE
TRUTH TO NOEL BRAND. WITH IT
WAS BORN A WAVE OF ANGER THAT
FOR A TIME OVER-RODE HIS
WEAKNESS WITH A BLAZING
DETERMINATION.



THEN, THE SUPREME IRONY OF FATE BROUGHT THE TWO BROTHERS
TOGETHER AFTER A LAPSE OF YEARS.



AS ONE PART OF MARTIN'S BRAIN REGISTERED THE SOUND OF HIS BROTHER'S VOICE, THE OTHER TRIGGERED HIM INTO ACTION.



A BURST OF CONCENTRATED FIRE SHATTERED THE NIGHT, WAKING THE ECHOES OVER THE SLEEPING TOWN OF BRIER.



WITHIN SECONDS, IT WAS OVER—
THE GESTAPO MEN LAY DEAD...

LET'S GET OUT
OF HERE BEFORE
THE BALLOON GOES
UP. WE'LL TAKE THE
OTHER CHAP WITH US.
I WANT TO KNOW
WHAT ALL THIS IS.



AS THE LAUNCH TURNED AND HEADED BACK FOR ENGLAND, NOEL BRAND TOLD HIS STORY WITH THE SIMPLE DIRECTNESS OF A MAN BEYOND ALL HOPE.

SO NOW YOU KNOW THE FACTS, MARTIN.
MY WIFE AND FATHER-IN-LAW WILL BE
SHIPPED TO GERMANY TO DIE. I'VE MADE
A MESS OF MY LIFE AND IT'S TOO
LATE TO CHANGE.

TAKE IT EASY,
NOEL. IT TOOK
RAW COURAGE
TO DO WHAT
YOU DID.



Strike Silent

IN HIS DILEMMA, MARTIN TURNED TO HIS SUPERIOR OFFICER FOR ADVICE



BY THIS TIME SEIDLER HAD BEEN BROUGHT THE NEWS OF THE COLLAPSE OF HIS PLANS AND NOEL BRAND'S ESCAPE. THAT NIGHT, IN THE PRISON AT BRIER.

YOUR HUSBAND HAS JUST CONDEMNED YOU TO DEATH, MADAME. I GAVE HIM THE CHANCE TO SAVE YOU AND HE WENT OVER TO THE BRITISH. HE LEFT YOU HERE TO DIE.



THE GESTAPO NEVER GIVE CHANCES, SEIDLER. YOU MEAN YOU TRIED TO USE NOEL BRAND FOR YOUR OWN PURPOSES — AND HE CHEATED YOU!

STUNG TO IMPOTENT FURY BY DULOCO'S SHREWISH INSIGHT, SEIDLER STRUCK OUT AT THE DLD MAN ...



MEANWHILE, AT THE CAMP ON THE ENGLISH COAST THE COMMANDO RECONNAISSANCE PARTY WAS MAKING ITS REPORT ...

IT ALL FITS IN. WE KNOW NOW THAT FOSTER IS DEAD. INTELLIGENCE HAVE JUST RECEIVED A RADIO MESSAGE FROM A MAN NAMED ROQUETON IN THE BRIER AREA. DO YOU KNOW HIM, BRAND?



Strike Silent

ONE HOUR LATER AN EMERGENCY STAFF CONFERENCE WAS CALLED AT HIGH LEVEL. WHEN IT WAS OVER...

THEN WE ARE AGREED, GENTLEMEN. TONIGHT WE MOUNT AN ATTACK ON THE GERMAN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM AT BRIER. A DIVERSIONARY ATTACK WILL BE LAUNCHED - WHILE THE MAIN BODY GO IN FOR THE OBJECTIVE.



TELEPHONES SHRILLED, SCHEDULES WERE PLANNED AND REVISED, MEN PORED OVER MAPS. A SMALL COG IN THE VAST WAR MACHINE MESSED INTO GEAR AND STARTED TO TURN.



THIS IS IT.
THE TOP BRASS
WANT THE JOB DONE
BEFORE JERRY HAS
TIME TO STRENGTHEN
HIS POSITIONS, AND
THIS TIME WE'RE GOING
IN STRENGTH!

ALTHOUGH NOEL BRAND'S NAME HAD BEEN CLEARED, MARTIN READ THE ANXIETY IN HIS FACE.

YOU KNOW THE COUNTRY ROUND BRIER. WE'RE TAKING YOU WITH US TONIGHT, BRAND.



THANK YOU, SIR. MY FAMILY ARE IN PRISON IN BRIER UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH. IF THEY COULD BE RELEASED...

THE CAPTAIN'S VOICE WAS REGRETFULLY

I'M SORRY, BRAND. THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO FOR THEM. THIS IS A TOP PRIORITY MISSION AND WE CAN'T AFFORD TO DIVERT OUR FORCES.



IT WAS ONE OF THE HARSH REALITIES OF WAR, BUT WATCHING HIS BROTHER, MARTIN BRAND MARVELLED AT HIS NEWLY-FOUND STRENGTH

I'M SORRY, NOEL. WHAT WILL YOU DO?

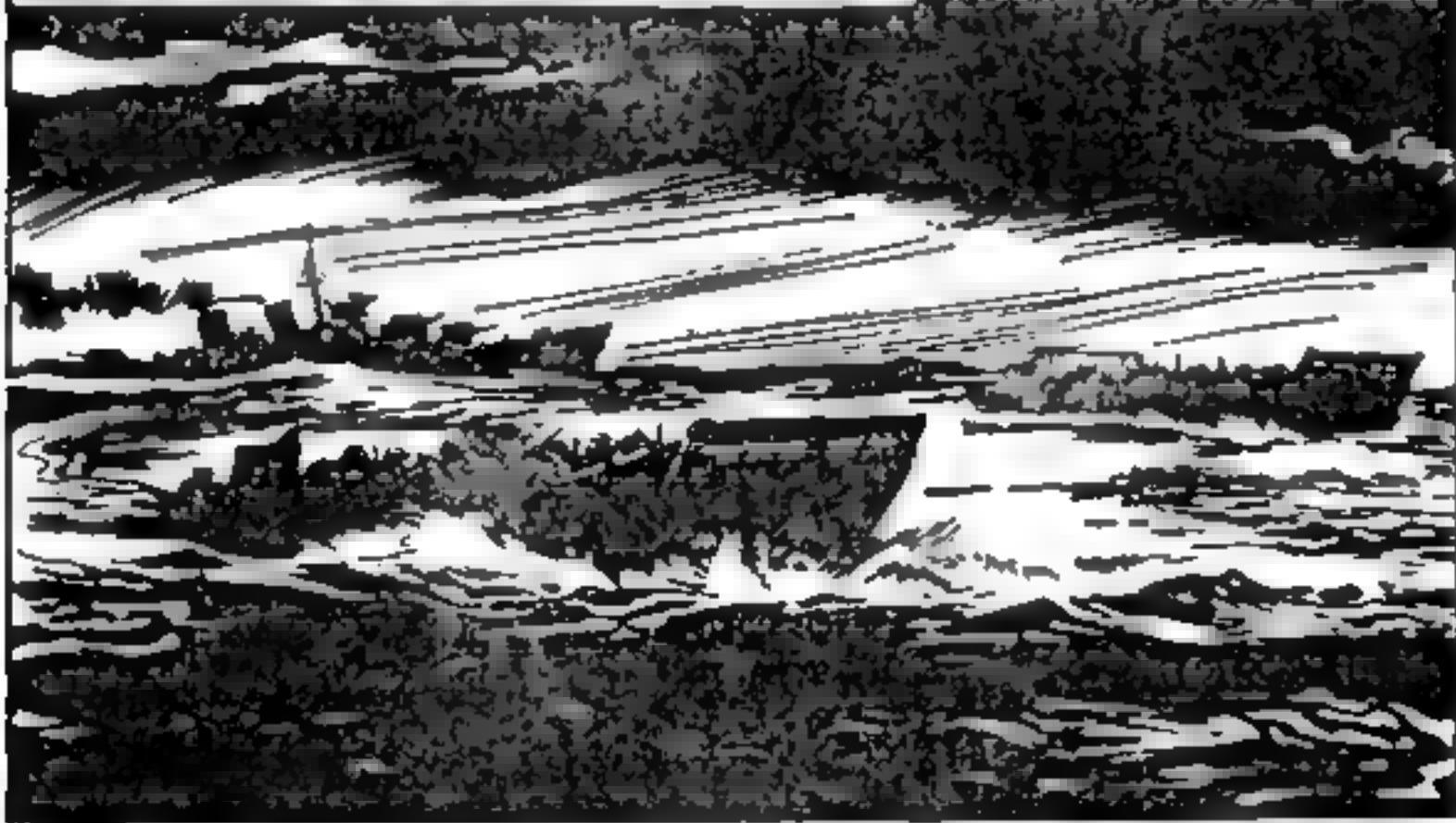
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I'LL STAY BEHIND IN BRIER. THERE MUST BE SOMETHING I CAN DO TO HELP THEM. I'LL FIND ROQUETON AND LINK UP WITH HIM. IF I CAN'T—I'LL DO IT ALONE!



Strike Silent

LATE THAT NIGHT, TWO LANDING CRAFT SLID OUT FROM BELOW THE HULL OF THE DARKENED ESCORT VESSEL AND CREEPT WITH MUFFLED ENGINES TOWARDS THE BRITTANY COAST.



SUDDENLY THE NIGHT SKY ERUPTED IN FLAME, SHOT WITH THE DULL ROAR OF EXPLOSIONS AND FAINT FARAWAY CHATTER OF AUTOMATIC GUNS.

THAT'LL BE THE DIVERSION! LOOKS LIKE OUR LADS GOT A FUEL DUMP.



IN THE GERMAN H.Q.
OUTSIDE BRIER, THE
COMMANDANT FLINCHED
AT THE VOICE ON THE
TELEPHONE ...



THE ASSAULT CRAFT GROUNDED AND
THE COMMANDOS MOVED SILENTLY
UP THE BEACH. SUDDENLY A DEEP
VOICE RIMMED IN THE DARKNESS



THAT'S
ROQUETON!
I'D KNOW HIS
VOICE
ANYWHERE

THE GREAT BUCK OF THE ROCK LOOMED UP OUT OF THE SHADOWS, FOLLOWED BY A CLUSTER OF HARD-FACED RESISTANCE FIGHTERS.

I KNEW IN MY HEART THAT YOU WOULD COME BACK SOON. THE BOCHE HAVE MINED THE CLIFF-TOPS, BUT I KNOW A WAY ROUND. AFTER ME, MES BRAVES.



AS THEY MOVED STEALTHILY AMONG THE ROCKS, NOEL BRAND SPOKE BRIEFLY TO ROQUETON .

MY WIFE AND DULOCQ— WHERE ARE THEY?

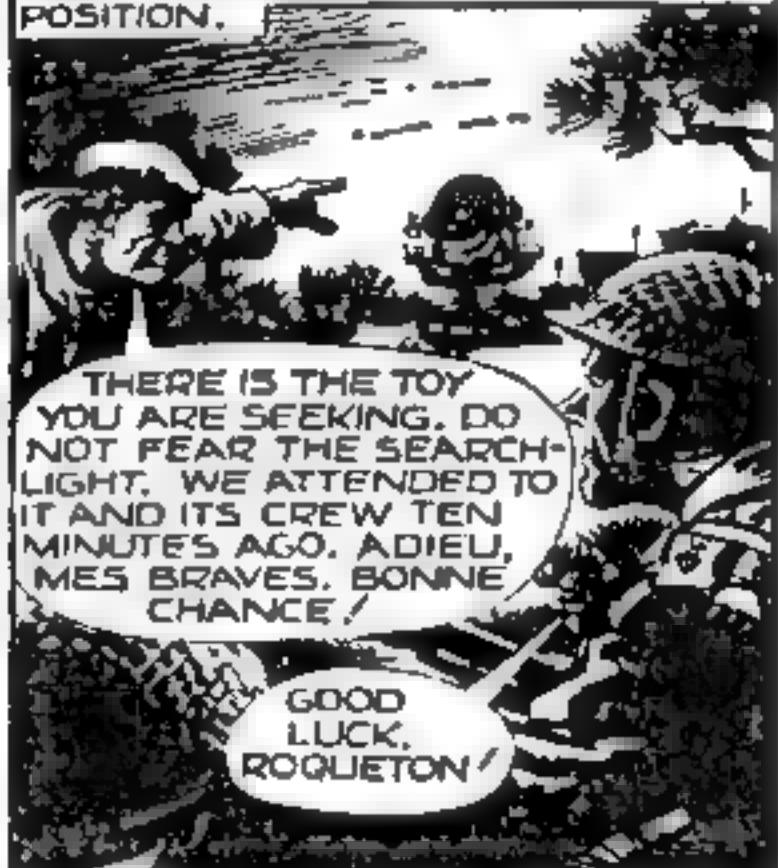


THEY ARE IN PRISON— BUT NOT FOR LONG. SEIDLER AND HIS GESTAPO PIGS WENT THERE AN HOUR AGO. WE'LL PUT THESE BRITISH TO WORK, THEN WE TAKE THE PRISON. WE NEED DULOCQ BADLY.

LED BY THE RESISTANCE LEADER, THE COMMANDOS CAME OUT ON THE CLIFF BEHIND THE ENEMY POSITION.

THERE IS THE TOY YOU ARE SEEKING. DO NOT FEAR THE SEARCH-LIGHT. WE ATTENDED TO IT AND ITS CREW TEN MINUTES AGO. ADIEU, MES BRAVES. BONNE CHANCE!

GOOD LUCK,
ROQUETON!



THERE WAS ONLY TIME FOR MARTIN BRAND AND HIS BROTHER TO EXCHANGE A SWIFT FAREWELL.

DON'T FORGET, NOEL. WHEN ALL THIS IS OVER WE'LL MEET AGAIN. WE COULD GO BACK TO THE FARM ..

NO FARMING FOR ME, MARTIN. I HAVEN'T CHANGED THAT MUCH! SOME DAY PERHAPS, I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN. GOODBYE, BROTHER. WE'VE A LONG WAY TO GO YET

ONCE AGAIN BRAND FELT THE QUICK PULSE OF EXCITEMENT THAT LEAPS IN THE FIGHTING MAN ON THE EDGE OF BATTLE.

YOUR PARTY WILL TAKE THE GUARD HUT, BRAND. IF ONE SINGLE JERRY COMES OUT OF IT ON HIS OWN TWO FEET, I'LL HAVE YOU COURT-MARTIALLED!

LEAVE IT TO US, SR!

THE BRITISH WERE POSED FOR ATTACK. THEN, AT THE SIGNAL THEY CLOSED IN. THE NIGHT SEEMED TO BURST APART IN A TUMULT OF GUNFIRE AND SHOUTED COMMANDS.

WATCH THAT MACHINE GUN BUNKER!

DIXON, GET YOUR MEN TO WORK ON THAT SCANNER! DESTROY WHAT YOU CAN'T TAKE AWAY!

Strike Silent



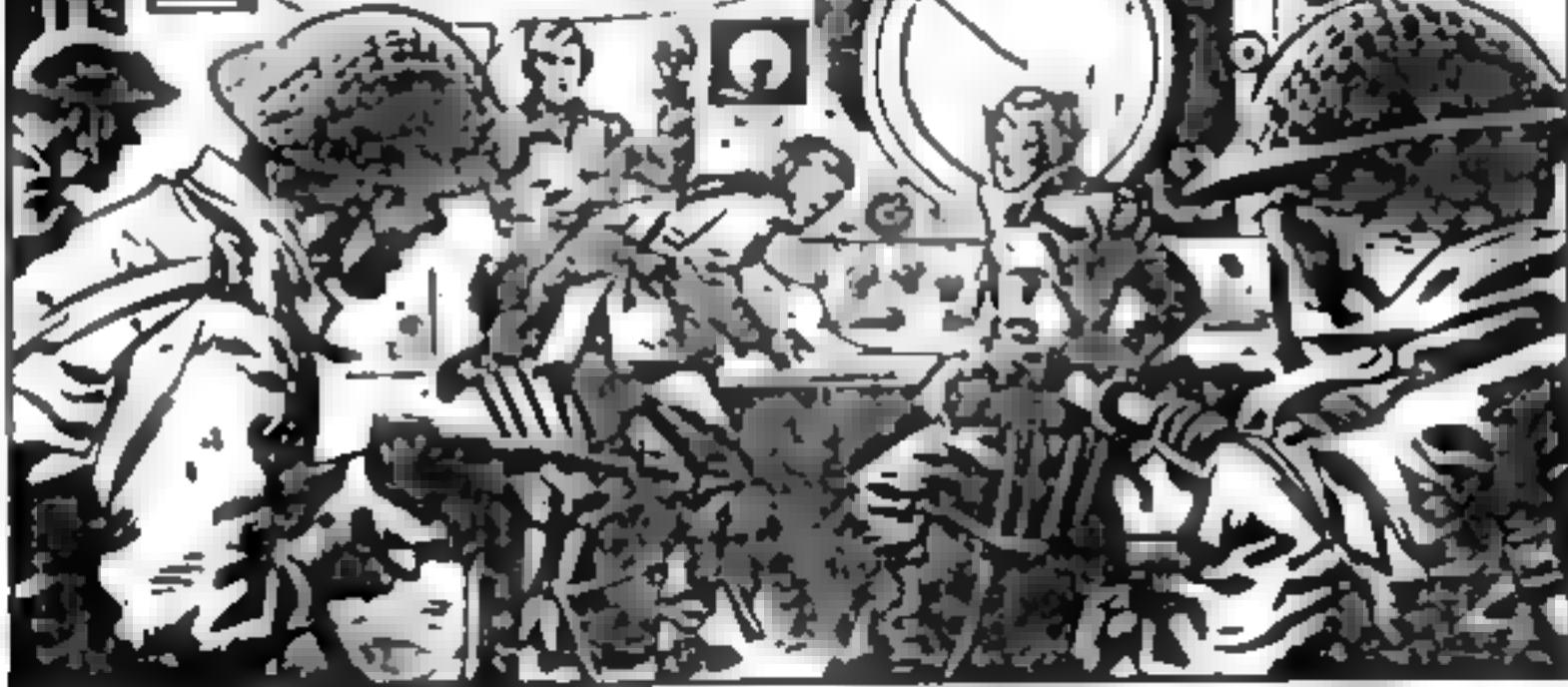
BRAND AND HIS PARTY CRASHED INTO THE GUARDROOM WITH TOMMY GUNS BLAZING, CARRYING HAVOC AND SUDDEN DEATH.



THE COMMANDOS SWIFT THROUGH THE AREA HAMMERING AT THE ENEMY, GIVING HIM NO CHANCE TO GATHER HIS WITS

STARTLED OUT WATCHERS STOOD AS THE DOORS OF THE COMMUNICATIONS ROOM BURST OPEN AND THEY FOUND THEMSELVES STARING AT THE MENACING MUZZLES OF THE TOMMY GUNS...

BACK UP AGAINST THE WALL! LEE-BANKE FU - GET TO WORK ON THAT GEAR YOU KNOW WHAT TO TAKE. WE'LL DESTROY THE REST.



SUDDENLY, IT WAS OVER. THE INVADERS CATHED AMID THE SMOKING SHAMBLES OF THE POST.

DEMOLITION CHARGE'S ALL SET!

OKAY, GET BACK TO THE BOATS. SOME OF YOU GIVE DIXON'S MOB A HAND WITH THAT GEAR. MAKE IT SNAPPY!



Strike Silent

AS THE RAIDING PARTY HEADED FOR THE BEACH, SEIDLER, IN THE GESTAPO PRISON AT BRIER, WAS PUTTING THE SCREW ON THE CAPTURED RESISTANCE LEADER.

GET THIS INTO YOUR SKULL, DULOCQ. YOUR CAUSE IS LOST. NOW I WANT THE NAME OF EVERY MAN IN YOUR SO-CALLED RESISTANCE GROUP.

THAT IS NO EASY TASK, M'SIEUR
EVERY MAN IN BRIER IS WITH US.

SUDDENLY, A HEAVY BLAST SHOOK THE PRISON TO ITS FOUNDATIONS. THE DOOR TO THE CELL SWUNG OPEN...

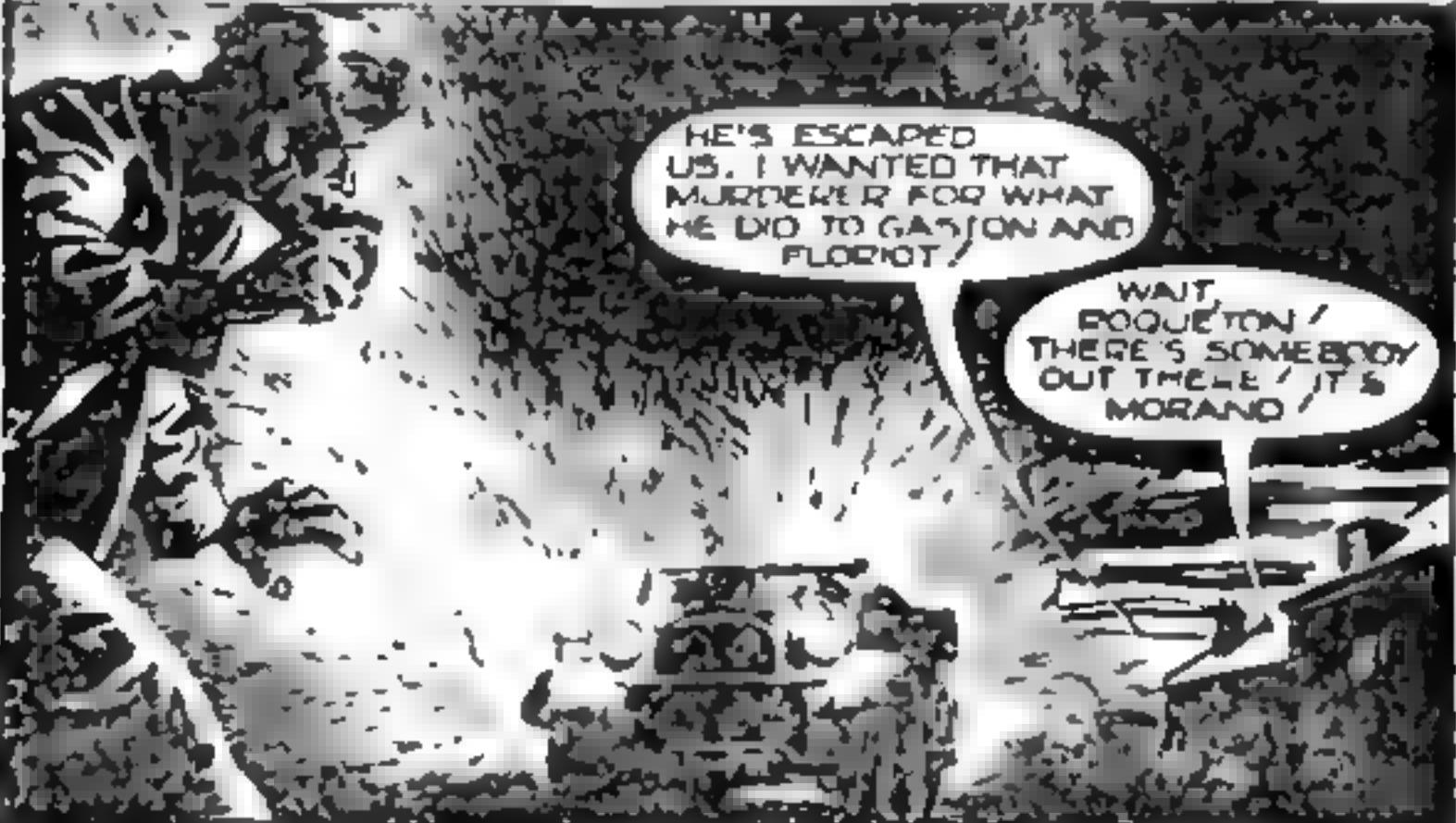
THE RESISTANCE! THEY'VE DYNAMITED THE WALL! THEY'RE SWARMING INSIDE!

SO! THEY WON'T FIND THEIR BELOVED LEADER ALIVE! ROEHMER, HAND ME YOUR GUN!

BUT BEFORE THE GESTAPO CHIEF COULD CARRY OUT HIS THREAT, HEAVY FOOTSTEPS POUNDED OUTSIDE SNARLING WITH RAGE. SEIDLER GATHERED HIS MEN AND FLFD AS ROQUETON AND MORANO BURST IN.



BUT THEY WERE TOO LATE. THE RESISTANCE FIGHTERS LOOKED ON HELPLESSLY AS THE BLACK GESTAPO CAR CATCHED UP SPEED.



A LITTLE MAN, SICK WITH HATE AND DESPAIR, BRANDED AS A TRAITOR TO HIS OWN PEOPLE. BUT MORAND HAD LEARNED OF THE NAZIS' PERFIETY.



DRIVERLESS AND OUT OF CONTROL.
THE GREAT CAR SWERVED, SCOOPED
UP MORAND ON ITS SHATTERED
RADIATOR, THEN HURTLED OVER THE
CLIFF TO THE BEACH A
HUNDRED FEET BELOW!



THE RAIDERS GATHERED ON THE CLIFF-TOP AND STARED AT THE BLAZING WRECKAGE BELOW THEM..

MORAND WAS A GOOD PATRIOT AFTER ALL!

HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR OUR CAUSE, MES AMIS!

ON THE LONELY COAST ROAD NOEL BRAND LOOKED OUTWARD ACROSS THE SEA. THE STRUGGLE AHEAD WOULD BE LONG AND WITHOUT MERCY BUT IT WOULD END IN VICTORY..

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING, NOEL?

OF MY BROTHER, HELOISE. I'VE A FEELING WE'LL MEET AGAIN SOMETIME, SOMEWHERE.

Strike Silent

AND IN THE BOWS OF THE ESCORT VESSEL AS IT CLEAVED THROUGH THE DARK WATERS OF THE SEA, MARTIN BRAND ECHOED HIS BROTHER'S THOUGHTS.



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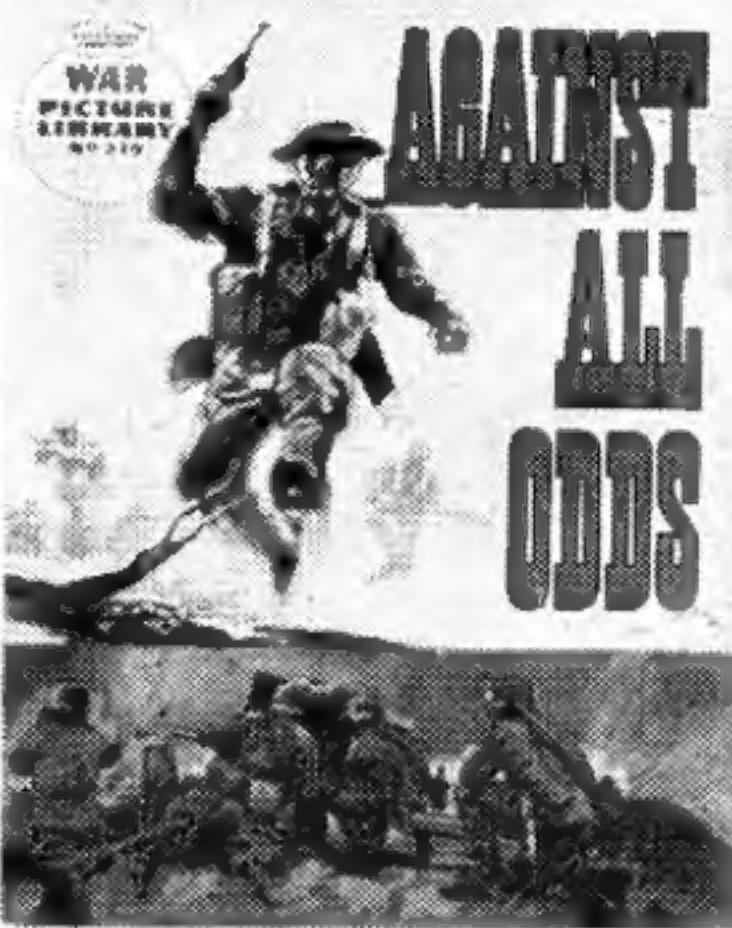
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